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U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1994

Farm Broadcasters Letter

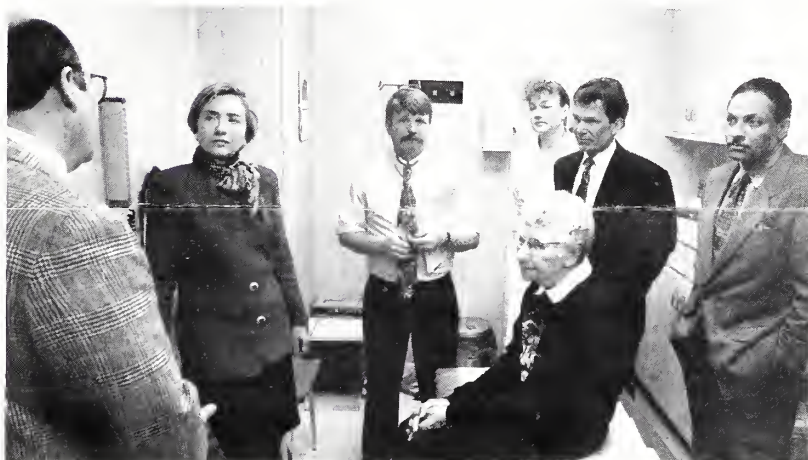


United States Department of Agriculture Office of Communications Washington, DC 20250-1340

Letter No. 2651

February 25, 1994

Problems discussed at the Great Plains Summit on Rural Health Care, conducted in Lennox, SD, Feb. 18, included too few medical providers in rural communities and insurance discrimination of farmers and small business owners. Visiting a health care clinic in Lennox is (L-R) Dr. Larry Sittner, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Scott Rogers, Louise Kerschman (seated), Linda Bruns, U.S. Senator Tom Daschle, and Secretary Mike Espy. USDA photo by Bob Nichols.



FOOD ASSISTANCE -- USDA's proposed 1995 budget calls for the Food Stamp program to be increased \$1 billion to \$25 billion. The request supports continued expansion of electronic benefits transfer, which allows food stamp recipients to use a plastic card to pay for their purchases, and basic program expansion as mandated by legislation last year. \$3.7 billion is proposed for the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children, up from \$3.3 this year. More than \$31 million is proposed to establish and improve nutrition education and training in Child Nutrition Programs. USDA food assistance programs help 40 million needy Americans. **Contact: Mary Dixon (202) 720-4623.**

MEAT AND POULTRY INSPECTION -- USDA's 1995 budget plan boosts the budget for the Food Safety and Inspection Service from \$585 million to \$605 million to improve the nation's meat and poultry inspection system. The budget includes funds to hire and train 200 more inspectors and \$25 million for research and strategy on pathogen reduction in meat. Funding is being proposed for Microbiological monitoring in baseline studies, evaluation of new processing operations to reduce contamination and consumer education. **Contact: Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623.**

LOAN DELINQUENCIES -- USDA is forming a Loan Resolution Task Force to address loan delinquencies, fraud, and abuse in programs such as USDA's Farmers Home Administration. The group will be headed by Ron Blackley, who will move from USDA chief of staff to devote full time to the effort. The task force will include representatives from USDA, the Internal Revenue Service, Justice Department, Office of Management and Budget, Farm Credit Administration, and a private CPA firm. Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy says, "We want to zealously collect on delinquent farm loans where borrowers have not acted in good faith to repay what they owe. This process will allow the successor agency, the Farm Service Administration, to focus on the mission of providing supervised credit to deserving and needy farm borrowers." **Contact: Ali Webb (202) 720-4623.**

AG LOANS -- Total farm debt (excluding households) at the end of 1993 is estimated at \$141 billion, up \$2 billion from a year earlier but 27 percent below the 1984 peak of \$193 billion. Commercial banks were the leading farm lender and posted another profitable year, surpassing their 1992 performance. Farm borrowing is forecast to increase about 2 percent this year, the fourth annual increase after six successive years of debt retirement. Adequate credit is available, except for beginning farmers. Average interest rate on outstanding farm debt was 8.1 percent last year, down from a high of 11 percent in 1982. **Contact: George Wallace (202) 219-0892.**

GENETIC COTTON -- USDA has determined that the genetically modified BXN cotton line does not present a plant pest risk and will no longer be regulated. The cotton was genetically engineered to have an enzyme that degrades herbicide, giving it herbicide tolerance. Fifteen field trials in 13 States over five growing seasons found no plant pest risk. State officials, universities, cooperative extension services, businesses, farmer and professional associations favor deregulation. The final rule on BXN cotton was published in the Federal Register. **Contact: Cynthia Eck (301) 436-5931.**

BEEF CATTLE TWINS -- Beef cattle germplasm is now available that has a 40 percent value for producing twin bulls and a 30 percent value for producing twin cows. The germplasm is from an experimental herd at USDA's Meat Animal Research Center at Clay Center, NE, and represents a 12-year study of producing cattle twins. Under a cooperative marketing agreement with the USDA Agricultural Research Service, American Breeders Service of DeForest, WI, is offering beef cattle semen and embryos. Public auction at the research center of young bulls is also available. Fourteen breeds are represented in the project. **Contact: Keith Gregory (402) 762-4176.**

BEEF IS KING -- Recent surveys show that the two favorite foods when eating out are hamburgers and steak. The survey by the National Restaurant Association found that what people feel they should order and what they actually order are two different things. When respondents were asked what they would like to order, fresh fruit was the number one choice. But when orders were actually placed, 87 percent chose hamburger. Of those patrons who said they would order poultry without skin, only 73 percent actually followed through. A meal can be improved by choosing small portions, and adding a salad, vegetable, bread, rice, or pasta. The study shows that while people say they want to include more fruits and vegetables in their restaurant diets, beef remains the king of the away-from-home market. **Contact: Beth Reames (504) 388-3329.**

BST AND SCIENCE -- Tests show that when BST (recombinant bovine somatotropin) is administered to cows it doesn't increase normal BST in milk. BST is a normal component of milk. Larry Guthrie, a dairy specialist with the University of Georgia Extension Service, says there is no scientific way to tell the difference between milk from BST-treated cows and that from nontreated cows, therefore labeling isn't possible. Guthrie says BST doesn't harm cows. BST has received a safety seal of approval from the National Institutes of Health, World Health Organization, American Medical Association, the Food and Drug Administration, and the American Dietetic Association. **Contact: Larry Guthrie (706) 542-2581.**

FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1916 -- While many sectors of agriculture seem to be doing very well these days, surveys show that some smaller family farmers are having a more difficult time than ever before. **Gary Crawford** talks with experts about the perils of small family farmers. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

CONSUMER TIME #1398 -- Summer Food Program growing; a health care summit; the vitamin E debate; potatoes: white or sweet?; advice for those seeking financial advice. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

AGRITAPE FEATURES #1908 -- Farm Program signup information; a possible peanut shortage; tougher days for "family" farms?; the new crop insurance proposal. (Weekly reel of features.)

NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1661 -- Pickle/wine test; selenium/virus connection; selenium folklore; blocking plant viruses; disease-resistant elms. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.) *NOTE: This series ceases production next month. The final tape, #1662, will be mailed March 8, 1994. Following that date Agricultural Research Service information will be incorporated into the Consumer Time and Agritape Features segments of the weekly cassette. The number of cuts in these two series will be expanded as necessary to include research stories.*

UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE -- No reports are scheduled for the week of March 1-7, but the Newsline will have new stories each day. Tuesday, March 8, crop/weather update; Thursday, March 10, U.S. crop production, world ag supply & demand; Friday, March 11, aquaculture update, world ag grain production, world oilseed situation, world cotton situation; Monday, March 14, feed update, oil crops update. **These are the USDA reports we know about in advance. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.**

USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359

COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545

Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.

FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

FEATURES -- **Lynn Wyvill** reports on new products from wood waste.

ACTUALITIES -- USDA chief meteorologist **Norton Strommen** on the weather and crop situation; FFA national officers meet **Secretary Mike Espy**.

UPCOMING FEATURES -- **DeBoria Janifer** reports on livestock and poultry; **Pat O'Leary** reports on precision farming.

Available on Satellite Galaxy 4, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT; Saturdays 10:00 a.m., EDT; Mondays 8:00 a.m., EDT.

OFFMIKE

NATIONAL FARM AND MACHINERY SHOW...was covered by **Charlie Blake** (WIKY, Evansville, IN), filing reports back to the station. Over 1,000 exhibitors this year. Charlie says soil and water conservation district meetings have been providing good information to producers about no-till, and the beneficial coexistence of wildlife and farming.

LEVEE REPAIR...is a hot issue with farmers served by **Jim Coyle** (KRES, Moberly, MO). The Army Corps of Engineers says it is not planning to repair levees protecting only farmland. Jim says producers are not clear about repairs to be made through the Soil Conservation Service. It has prompted many farmers to begin their own repairs. They are worried about flood waters returning this spring when snow melt in the upper midwest combines with rain.

ON THE AIR AGAIN...is **Paul Pippert** (WHB, Kansas City, MO), formerly of WIBW, Topeka, KS. Paul will be producing reports and hosting a live call-in program, "Farm Feedback," that airs from 11:30 to noon.

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TRIUMPH OF AGRICULTURE SHOW...in Omaha, NE will be covered live by **Joe Gangwish** (WOW, Omaha) and crew. Among the exhibits, producers will get a look at the latest equipment. Joe says there was a good voter participation in his area on the soybean referendum. Results are expected in March. The direction the 1995 Farm Bill will take is generating comment. Experts on Joe's programs predict that the legislation will move more into environmental issues.

EFFECTS...of the ice storm that hit Tennessee and Kentucky are still being felt, says **Dan Gordon** (Tennessee Agrinet, Nashville). Trees toppled, pulling power lines down with them. Some producers went seven days without electric power. Widespread damage to farm buildings and fences. Dan says the markets were closed for two days.

THANKS...for the feedback from **Wyatt Cox** (Peoples Radio Network, White Springs, FL). Wyatt uses items from our daily Newsline and weekly cassette service on his programs that feed 100 stations.

VIC POWELL 
Office of Communications